



1. If you have received the ultimate healing from Christ, that is, the healing of your soul
  - a. Then you have been called to do exactly as Simon's mother-in-law did
    - i. Rise up, and serve!
  - b. We have not been saved so we can coast through the rest of this life, just looking ahead to the day when we will be with Jesus
    - i. We have been saved in order to serve
    - ii. A good lesson we ALL need to be reminded of from time to time!
- ii. Since it was the Sabbath, everyone was still at home
  1. But as the sun began to set, people from all over the city began to bring the sick and the demon possessed to Jesus... and Jesus healed them ALL!
- c. So now, in verse 42, it is the next day, and Jesus has departed and gone to a desolate place
  - i. As we see so often in the Gospels, though, Jesus' alone time doesn't last for long
    1. The people found him where he was, and they urged him to stay there in their area
      - a. But Jesus knew his time was short, didn't he?
        - i. When the Apostle Paul would go on his missionary journeys a few years later, he was able to spend months, even years, at one place
          1. Sharing the Good News... making disciples... and planting churches
            - a. Giving them a good strong foundation to stand upon
        - b. But Jesus didn't have this luxury
          - i. As we learned a few weeks ago, it's possible that Jesus was well into his first year of ministry by this time
            1. Within less than 36 months, he would be delivered up to the Gentiles, and he would be crucified
    - ii. And so he said to them, *"I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for THIS purpose."*
      1. Jesus had a very specific message he had been sent to proclaim
      2. And he needed to get it out to as many towns as possible before the hour of his death arrived
        - a. This message was the Good News
          - i. But it was more than that, wasn't it?
            1. Jesus had been sent to preach the Good News OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
        - b. If you read through the Gospels, you'll find that this was one of the CENTRAL themes of Jesus' teaching and preaching ministry here on earth
          - i. We find the teaching of the Kingdom the most in the Gospel of Matthew
            1. Although it is interesting... in Matthew's Gospel it is referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than the Kingdom of God
              - a. Some have tried to speculate that this is because there are two different kingdoms being referenced in the Gospels
            2. But the better explanation is to remember that Matthew was writing to a primarily JEWISH audience

- a. And the Jewish people HIGHLY revered the name of God in those days
        - i. So much so that many would not even say His name
    - 3. So Matthew isn't teaching a separate Kingdom from the Kingdom of God
      - a. He's simply adjusted his language to the customs of his audience
  - 3. So we find Jesus teaching on the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, all throughout the four Gospels
    - a. For whatever reason, John mentions the Kingdom the least in his Gospel... only about 3 or 4 times
      - i. But as we'll see soon, these three or four times are MASSIVELY important to us as followers of Christ
- d. So this brings us to a question... what IS the Good News of the Kingdom of God?
  - i. We've been taught for quite a while now that the good news we are called to tell people is plain and simple: "JESUS LOVES YOU!"
    - 1. Or maybe, "Jesus has a wonderful plan for your life, won't you just accept him into your heart?"
  - ii. Some have gone a little deeper by teaching that the Good News can be shared through the ABC's of salvation...
    - 1. A... Admit that you are a sinner
    - 2. B... Believe that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, and that salvation comes through him alone
    - 3. C... Confess with your mouth that He is Lord
  - iii. There are others who have gone even deeper in their proclamation of the Good News, as they walk a person down the "Romans Road" of salvation
    - 1. Romans 3:10... "As it is written, none is righteous, no not one."
    - 2. Romans 3:23... "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
    - 3. Romans 5:8... "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
    - 4. Romans 6:23... "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"
    - 5. And then Romans 10:9-11
      - a. <sup>9</sup>if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.
  - iv. These all CERTAINLY qualify as Good News, wouldn't you agree?
    - 1. But when the Gospels speak of Jesus proclaiming the "Good News of the Kingdom of God," you can't help but to get the sense that there is something MUCH bigger going on here
      - a. We're not just proclaiming a way one can be saved
        - i. We're proclaiming the very Kingdom of the God of all Creation!
          - 1. So for the rest of our time this morning, I want us to look through the Gospels and see if we can get a bigger picture of what this Good News was that Jesus was sent to proclaim
            - a. And it ALL revolves around THE KINGDOM

### 3. The Kingdom Misinterpreted

a. What we need to first realize is that, as Jesus came preaching that the Kingdom of God was at hand, this wasn't a NEW idea for the people of Israel

i. The people of Israel had been looking to God FOR CENTURIES, hoping and praying that the Kingdom would be restored to them

1. We get a glimpse of this in Mark 11:9-10, when Jesus enters Jerusalem, riding upon the young colt, and the crowds shout out...

a. <sup>9</sup>"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! <sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

i. The people of Israel were looking ahead to the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom

1. All of the political might and power

2. All of the national prosperity

3. All of the independence they had enjoyed under David and Solomon's rule

ii. They had heard Jesus preach of the Kingdom of God, and for them it meant the restoration of the Kingdom of their father David

2. In Acts 1:6-8, we see that this is still the mentality of the disciples, even after Christ's resurrection from the dead

a. In verse 6, they ask Jesus, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

i. They still were looking for a restoration of their nation

1. A return back to the "good ol' days"

ii. And we can't really blame them for this desire, can we?

1. After the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by the Assyrians, and after the Southern Kingdom had been taken away to captivity in Babylon

a. We read over and over about the promise that God will bring Israel BACK from Israel, and that the Kingdom will be restored

i. This was what we heard at the beginning of the service in our reading from Daniel 7

1. The Kingdom of the Ancient of Days would be given to "one like a son of man"

a. And this Kingdom would NEVER be destroyed

2. As the people of Israel, including the disciples, had heard Jesus repeatedly preaching about the Kingdom of God, as well as repeatedly referring to himself as the Son of Man...

a. It's no wonder that for them, the Good News of the Kingdom of God would mean that they would soon rise to be the dominant world power once again

3. Wasn't this what Gabriel had said to Mary in Luke 1:31-33...

a. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

i. But Jesus DID NOT come to make Israel a powerful geopolitical nation, did he?

1. One of the reasons we know this for certain is that Jesus' message was that the Kingdom of God is at hand!

### 4. The Kingdom of God is at Hand

- a. This was what John the Baptist preached in Matthew 3:1-2, as we read...
    - i. <sup>1</sup>*In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
  - b. In Mark 1:14-15, we read that...
    - i. <sup>14</sup>*... after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*
      - 1. Jesus and John’s message was the same:
        - a. The Kingdom of God is HERE
          - i. So REPENT!
      - 2. It’s fascinating that Jesus preached on the Kingdom of God SO MANY times throughout the Gospels...
        - a. But NOT ONCE did he advocate for any kind of political uprising
        - b. NOT ONCE did he urge his followers to rise up against the authority of the Scribes and the Pharisees
        - c. NOT ONCE did he rally them to take up arms against the oppressive tyrants of the Roman Empire
      - 3. In fact, Jesus affirms the exact opposite of this mentality in John 18:33-38
        - a. When Jesus is standing on trial before Pontius Pilate, Pilate asks him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”
          - i. Jesus replies to him in verse 36, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”*
    - ii. The Kingdom of God was at hand... but it had not arrived like the coming of the kingdoms of this world
      - 1. If it had, then Jesus’ servants would have been fighting tooth and nail to try to free their King from his captors
        - a. But for those who had been given ears to hear, they knew that the Kingdom that Jesus had brought was in fact, a VERY different Kingdom from all the other Kingdoms of this world
5. We begin to get an idea, very early on in Jesus’ ministry, of how utterly unique the Kingdom of God truly is
  - a. If you remember, I mentioned that John only mentions the Kingdom of God a few times in his Gospel
    - i. But the few times that he does mention it, it packs a powerful punch!
      - 1. In fact, John 3, verses 3 and 5 give us THE most important disclaimer about the Kingdom of God...
        - a. As Jesus is talking to Nicodemus, he says to him in verses 3 and 5,
          - i. <sup>3</sup>*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... <sup>5</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*
        - b. As we enter into this next season of political debates and arguments, one of the hot-button issues is the border, right?
          - i. How are we going to address the thousands of illegal immigrants streaming into our country?
          - ii. How are we going to clean up this mess that has been going on for many years?

1. How do we get back to a system of PROPERLY bringing immigrants into this country, where they can LEGALLY become citizens and establish a better life for themselves?
  - c. These are the kinds of questions that we will NEVER need to be concerned with regarding the Kingdom of God
    - i. For the ONLY path to citizenship in GOD's Kingdom is that you must be born again
      1. Unless you are washed clean of your sins, and you are given a new heart through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, you CANNOT enter the Kingdom of God
      2. There is no such thing as an illegal immigrant in the Kingdom
        - a. EVERYONE who is in the Kingdom MUST be born again
  2. In Matthew 11, verses 11-12, as Jesus is speaking about John the Baptist to the people, he says,
    - a. <sup>11</sup>Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup>From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.
      - i. Beginning with John being thrown into prison, the Kingdom of Heaven had come under attack
        1. Those who were beginning to realize that Jesus and John's message EXCLUDED them from the Kingdom, began to try to take it by force
        2. How absolutely foolish... to try to take the Kingdom of God by force
          - a. By doing violence to the commands and laws set forth by God Himself
          - b. There is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God
            - i. You MUST be born again!
  3. The Kingdom of God is THE most exclusive Kingdom on earth
    - a. In Matthew 12:25-30, as the Pharisees accuse Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus says to them, "How can Satan's kingdom stand if he is casting out his own demons?"
      - i. And in verses 28 and 30 he says, <sup>28</sup>*But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you...* <sup>30</sup>*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."*
        1. Jesus came casting out demons by the power of the Spirit of God, for the KINGDOM of God was HERE
          - a. And you are either a part of the Kingdom, gathering in the harvest alongside of Christ, or you are against him... plain and simple
          - b. You must be born again!
- b. So is THAT the extent of the Good News of the Kingdom of God then... that you must be born again?
  - i. Does our task of gathering in the harvest simply consist of "getting people saved" so they can now be in the Kingdom?
    1. Well, we must not forget that while our JUSTIFICATION is immediate, our SANCTIFICATION will last for the rest of our lives

- a. And so Jesus gives us some very clear evidences of how we can know that we are truly born again, and that we have been brought into the Kingdom of God
- ii. In Matthew 5:3, Jesus says, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*
  - 1. The Kingdom of heaven is ONLY for those who have realized the absolute poverty of their own soul, apart from Christ
    - a. It is ONLY for those who can sing as the old hymn says,
      - i. Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.
    - b. The Kingdom of Heaven is ONLY for those who helplessly look to the Rock of Ages for HIS grace
- iii. And in Matthew 5:10, Jesus also says, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*
  - 1. My friends, one of the greatest evidences of the fact that you have TRULY been born again is that you hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God
    - a. You LONG to please him and honor him and bring glory to His name, through your obedience to His commands
    - b. You LONG to live the righteous life that His Word holds out before us
      - i. But the reality is, if we REALLY hunger and thirst after the righteousness described in this Book, then we are guaranteed to be persecuted
        - 1. We are promised that this world will hate us
          - a. Why?
            - i. Because we are NOT OF THIS WORLD
  - 2. If you are a follower of Jesus then your first and greatest citizenship does not reside here in the United States
    - a. It resides in the Kingdom of God
      - i. THAT is where your ULTIMATE allegiance must be
      - ii. And when the world begins to realize that you are, in essence, a traitor to THEIR kingdom... you will be persecuted for it
    - b. But Jesus would say to you, *“Blessed are you who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for the Kingdom of Heaven is YOURS!”*
      - i. And just to be sure we understand the importance of righteousness in the Kingdom, Jesus gives us the negative promise in Matthew 5:20...
        - 1. *<sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will NEVER enter the kingdom of heaven.*
      - ii. The standards of the Kingdom are IMPOSSIBLY high, UNLESS you are born again
- iv. But Jesus doesn’t just stop at being poor in spirit and hungering and thirsting after righteousness
  - 1. He also speaks of the importance of FORGIVENESS for those who are in the Kingdom of God
    - a. We see this in the Lord’s Prayer, as Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray by saying to them in Matthew 6:9-13,





